THE ALBANIAN PRINCIPALITY

ference of Ambassadors had scarcely drawn 175 x
the boundary lines to the northeast, the Albanian-Montenegrin-Serbian frontier, than a new war crisis appeared in the offing, none the less serious than that of the preceding November. After a great deal of debate the Great Powers decided to occupy Scutari, and, on May 13, an international contingent of marines entered Scutari. At this time Scutari was governed by Vice-Admiral Cecil Burney.

Of the provisional government, which was 642 •
operating at this time in Albania, we wish to 175 x
point out that it received its authority by the proclamation of independence of November 28, 1912, and this status was confirmed, on December 20, 1912, by the Conference of Ambassadors having taken cognizance thereof.

The official title of the new government was "The Provisional Albanian Government" and was placed under the presidency of Ismail Qemal Bey Vlora and the vice-presidency of Monsignor Nicholas Kachori, Catholic Prelate of Durazzo.

The territory over which they ruled was unique because of its miniature size. Their jurisdiction extended about a stone's throw

[See category 116, pp. 45-46 --Analyst]

from Valona, and the funds necessary for the support of any government was sadly lacking. The principal work of this government was to uphold the Albanian cause and defend the rights of the people. However, the government was a virtual prisoner within the walls of Valona and was exposed to the machinations of the Balkan intrigues. To the north of Valona were the troops of Serbia, to the south those of the Greeks, and to the east, barely twenty miles from the city, was the ubiquitous Djavid Pasha, avowed destroyer of Albania. To complete the vicious net that the Balkans hoped to cast about the new Albania, the sea was blocked by a Greek squadron.

By April of the year 1913, the territory of the provisional government had been enlarged by the addition of territories in central and northern Albania evacuated by the Serbian troops. The government then proceeded to establish in these areas local authorities patterned and based upon the "Organic Law of Albania."

One of the great sins of the Conference of Ambassadors and the International Commission of Control was the evil of procrastination, in which both indulged. Had a ruling prince

3: Redlich S-3 (no date) 1936 EG1 Albania EG1

The Republic of Albania

ON Christmas evening of 1924, Ahmed Bey Zogu won over the considerate and intelligent elements of the population. He re-entered Tirana and was greeted by the whole town with shouts of cheer and gratitude and was hailed as the leader who would direct Albania into a peaceful and prosperous future. As soon as harmony and tranquility had been restored, the young leader called upon the Albanians for the election of a Constitutional Assembly, which body declared Albania a republic in January, 1925, and the Albanians showed unwavering loyalty by electing, on January 31, 1925, Ahmed Bey Zogu as their first president.

The new president studied the needs, requirements and the psychology of his people. He was determined to make Albania into a peaceful and united nation, and, through his obvious efforts, he won the support and admiration of the strongest and sturdiest clans of Albania. These clans, which had never paid taxes to the Sultans of Turkey, now began to

3: Redlich S-3 (no date) 1936 EG1 Albania EG1

pay taxes to the new government. As a further sign of their loyalty, they laid down their arms, returned to their homes and their farms, thoroughly convinced that the new president will safeguard the interests of the nation.

Through his highly developed penchant for law and order, President Ahmed Bey Zogu won the cooperation of the Beys of Albania. Until this time the Beys of Albania were too proud to unite under another Bey as their chief. They had engaged in petty quarrels and waged war against each other like the Barons of mediaeval England. The firm hand of Ahmed Bey Zogu tended towards forming them into a national union, and they accepted Ahmed Bey Zogu as their chief and president.

In reaching these ends, Ahmed Bey Zogu proved himself a magnet rather than an autocrat or tyrant. In his way he has given ample evidence to his people that his chief aim in life, and his only objective is to put Albania on an equal rank with other civilized nations.

3: Redlich S-3 (no date) 1936 EG1 Albania EG1

The Kingdom of Albania

642 THE peak of President Zogu's success was reached on September 1, 1928, when, upon the acclamation of his subjects, Albania was declared a democratic, constitutional, hereditary monarchy and this able leader was proclaimed the King of the Albanians, under the title of King Zog I.

643 King Zog's rise to the throne of Albania is in keeping with the psychology of the Albanian people. In this rugged country, the idea of a king has taken very deep root, and in the mind of the Albanian no president can fill the places occupied by King Pyrrhus, Alexander the Great and Scanderbeg the Great.

Under King Zog, Albania has been making steady progress toward modernization of such magnitude that it can be favorably compared to that promoted by other leaders of great nations who have assumed power and built an united country out of what might have been chaos.

When we consider that Albania has passed through the upheaval of the world war fol-

System of Government

642 ALBANIA is a democratic, constitutional, hereditary monarchy, ruled by a king of the ancient dynasty of the Zogus of Mati, which family was interrelated by marriage in the fifteenth century with Scanderbeg the Great, Albania's national hero-king.

643 According to the Constitution, the monarchy is hereditary in the male line in the Zogu dynasty. In case of the absence of a direct heir, the ruling king designates, with the approval of Parliament, his own successor from the male line of his family.

The king names the Prime Minister and the cabinet.

646 Parliament is composed of a House of Representatives, deputies to which are elected by free, equal, universal and direct suffrage of all male citizens. One deputy for every 15,000 population is elected for the term of four years. Parliament consists now of 56[1] deputies.

Any citizen of 30 years of age and over,

[1] [Errata: should be 58, 76 Cf. Errata sheet, p. 269, cat. 116--Analyst]

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

famous of these chieftains were Kara Mohammed of Scutari, and Ali Pasha of Ioannina. The former, at the end of the last century, aimed at an independent sovereignty, which his son, Mustapha Pasha, asserted in open rebellion in 1831; and the latter, notwithstanding the frightful cruelties of which he was guilty, still lives in tale and song as the mighty upholder of Albanian independence against Ottoman tyranny. Subsequent risings have, however, resulted only in the death or banishment of the most influential members of leading families, the last *coup d'état* of this description having been carried out at Prisrend and Uskup in 1881. The great landholders are now all Moslems, the property of which the Christian proprietors were despoiled at the end of last century by Ali Pasha having, on his death, been appropriated by the Sultan.

But, whether Christian or Moslem, each section of the Albanian nation has its own traditional laws and usages by which their social life is alone regulated. The Miridites claim to have received theirs from the Dukadjini princes, who, according to them, were the ancestors of their own chieftains. Their internal government is a species of aristocratic republic, all matters affecting the community being decided in council by the chiefs, the elders, and other hereditary functionaries.

The dwellings of the Albanians are quite in keeping with the character and mode of life of their occupants. Even at Ioannina, where the customs more closely approximate to those of the Greeks, the houses have a gloomy appearance from without, being shut in by

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

133 symmetry into a tangle of high and broken ranges. The valleys they enclose are narrow but fertile, and from them powerful streams pursue their twisted courses down to the Adriatic.

361 Albania has many times been overrun in the strife of empires for the control of the Straits of Otranto; and it is in the almost inaccessible fastnesses of the interior rather than in the rich coastal plain that the remnant of the Illyrians have made their homes. There they have found freedom; for, so wild and rugged are the mountains, and so poor the prospect of wealth which they offer, that none of Albania's conquerors have attempted to rule them except in name.

To this day the majority of the Albanians live in the mountains; but at different times — when the growth of population in the highlands has pressed too hard upon the means of subsistence, or when political conditions have been favourable — families have moved down to the plains or to the towns. Thus, in the seventeenth century, under the protection of Islam, the tribesmen of the North flowed back into the Kossovo. But [181] the trend has been a slow one; for the Albanians prize freedom above all else, and many that have descended to the plains have returned again to the mountains. The plains are rich, but, as the malaria saps a man's strength, so work on the big estates destroys his independence, and submission to the laws of the conqueror corrupts his soul. Thus the lowlands have ever been the province of the foreign overlord, and it is in the mountains, beyond the reach of invaders and guarded by the armed might of the clans, that the moral and material strength of Albania resides.

642 The steep and rugged mountains, the deep and pathless forests, the drifts of snow in winter, and the spate of the rivers in spring and autumn have preserved the Albanians from foreign conquerors. But these obstacles to communications, which have so often turned back hostile armies, have operated powerfully against the growth of a centralised Albanian state. Geography has thus combined with contending foreign Powers to promote disunity among the Albanians. The ancient Illyrian and Pelasgian kingdoms were seldom even allied, and, under the Turkish Empire, the country was divided for political and

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

administrative ends. Indeed, save for the short-lived rule of Skanderbeg, there had never been an independent Albania until modern times. It is therefore small matter for surprise that the Albanians have hardly acquired a national or state consciousness; nor indeed, outside of the towns and the coastal plain, has nature encouraged, or their way of life given rise to, social organisation in any form.

At the time of which I write, the family, or clan, was the basic, indeed the only unit of society among the Gheg mountaineers; and was held together by common ownership of the means of production and common interest in their defence. The head, or chief, of the clan still preserved patriarchal powers, sometimes even of life and death over its members. He arranged their marriages, allotted them their tasks, settled their disputes, and decided what courses they should follow in the burning issues of blood feuds and politics. In recent years, however, the spread of Western ideas had weakened the traditional respect for the patriarchal authority; nor was there any sufficient intermediate patriotism of the province or the village to take its place. Indeed, the village community as we know it did not exist, for the village of the Gheg highlands was but a group of houses, each often as much as a mile from its neighbour. There were no village councils or other corporate institutions, and the feuds between the inhabitants prevailed over their common interests. The ancient tribal system was thus dissolving into anarchy, for where there is no community there can be no law. Indeed, the cry of "stop thief!" would have been almost inconceivable among the Albanians, "Because", as Wordsworth wrote of other highlanders:

> the good old rule
> Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
> That they should take, who have the power,
> And they should keep who can.

In such circumstances, each man had to be his own law-giver, and alone, or at best with the help of his family, defended his rights or punished those that trespassed against him.

Anarchy knows no prisons — the most fundamental of social

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

of their political genius is attested by the number of remarkable men of action which their race has given to the world. Alexander the Great, Pyrrhus of Epirus, the Köprülüs, Mehmet Ali of Egypt, Ali of Yannina, Condouriotis, Crispi, and Kemal Ataturk may justly be reckoned among them; not to speak of more than twenty Grand Viziers, and a host of Generals and politicians who served the empires of Macedon, Rome, and Turkey. Yet it is significant of the disunity and intractability of their nation that, although Albanians have often risen to rule empires, only twice in a thousand years — under Skanderbeg and under Zog; and then only with foreign support — has an Albanian ruled Albania.

The Albanians were thus remarkable as individuals rather than as a people, representative perhaps of the highest levels to which man can attain without submitting to the yoke and goad of a community. Their life was too harsh and their amenities too few to permit of any flowering of culture, but, though their circumstances were primitive beyond measure, yet they were never barbarous. Their aquiline features and delicate hands were matched by a dignity of bearing and tolerance of outlook eloquent of the natural distinction of their race. Pyrrhus had called them *shkipetare*, or Sons of the Eagle, and their fierce and predatory natures well deserved the name. Keen of eye and cold of heart, they were bold in decision, but, like all mercenaries, unpredictable in battle. Freedom and vengeance were their ruling passions; and they lived without joy and died with reluctance rather than regret. Ungovernably proud, they were impatient of all restraint, utterly unteachable, deaf to appeals, suspicious of intentions, hard to lead, and impossible to drive; great gentlemen and great robbers, prizing honour above honesty, gold more than both and power beyond them all.

3

THE independence of Albania was not achieved by the exertions of the Albanians: the mountaineers among them had never been other than independent, while the townsmen had wel-

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

comed Turkish protection against the Slavs and Greeks who threatened them on every side. It resulted rather from the jealousies of the Powers; and it was their representatives who determined the territories of the new state with such singular disregard for economic and ethnological considerations that they left as many Albanians outside the boundaries of Albania as within them.

The total number of Albanians has been generally computed at some two millions. Of these, upwards of one million lived within the frontiers which were proposed by the Ambassadors' Conference in 1913, ratified in 1926, and once more restored in 1945. Of the remainder, more than six hundred thousand inhabited the Kossovo, while the others were scattered in Montenegro, Macedonia, and Epirus. The amputation of the Kossovo was a heavy loss to the new state; for the region was the natural granary of the northern provinces, and the standard of living of the Ghegs rose or fell according as they were allowed or denied free access to it.

The economic and social structure of the Ghegs, or Northern Albanians, was one of tribal anarchy, save in the coastal plain and the Kossovo, where there were feudal estates. Islam and Roman Catholicism were the accepted religions: the Moslems inhabiting Central and North-eastern Albania with the Kossovo, the Catholics Mirdita and the inaccessible ranges of the north-west. A way of life near to the tribal system of the Ghegs still survived in the mountains of Southern Albania, but the Tosk tribes had never wholly recovered from the repressions of Ali the Lion and had increasingly disintegrated into communities of landowning peasants. The broad plains of the South, however, remained divided into feudal estates, owned by an Ottomanised ruling class and worked in part by an Orthodox Christian peasantry. Thus, while the distinction between Moslems and Catholics was one of geography and history, the Catholics being those Albanians whom the Turks had never subdued, that between Moslems and Orthodox was one rather of class and of cash.

It was scarcely to be expected that a conference of ambassadors would quickly set up a strong state among a people divided

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG 1 Albania EG 1

578 612 by geography, dialect, religion, and tradition, as well as by the new frontiers assigned to them. Nor indeed were the Powers conspicuous by their efforts to achieve Albanian unity. The German Prince of Wied, whom they chose as head of the new state, arrived in Durazzo in March 1914, with no previous experience of the Balkans and little enough of fallen human nature. He found his principality torn between three armed factions, each supported by foreign gold and inspired by the personal ambition of their leaders. These were Prenk Bib Doda Pasha, hereditary Captain of the Catholic Mirdita; Essad Pasha Toptani, a former general of the Turkish army and the most powerful chief in Central Albania; and Ismail Kemal Vlora, a cousin of the Grand Vizier Ferid Pasha and the chief man among the Tosks. On his arrival the Prince invited these warlike men to dinner, and, in the course of conversation, Prenk Bib Doda turned to him and remarked:

"If Albania is to be ruled peacefully, three persons ought to be hanged: Ismail Kemal, Essad Pasha, and myself! If all three of us were dead Albania would fare much better!"

Seldom in history has such disinterested advice been tendered by a subject to his sovereign. Prince William, however, failed to act upon it and within six months he was driven from his throne, never to return, by the bashi-bazouks of Essad Pasha and Ismail Kemal.

In the years of the first World War and of its aftermath, Prenk and Ismail Kemal intrigued and counter-intrigued with the agents of the Powers whose armies marched and countermarched across Albania. But they were not destined to see the final settlement: Ismail Kemal died in Italy in 1918, apparently of natural causes, while Prenk and Essad were both murdered in 1920 at the instigation of the Italian Government; the latter while attending the Peace Conference in Paris. In Albania strife and confusion persisted for a time; but, with the passing of the old leaders and in face of the determination of Italy, Yugoslavia, and Greece to deny to each other the control of the Straits of Otranto, the internal political situation slowly crystallised into a recognisable form.

000 A new generation of political leaders now came forward,

CONSTITUTION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

PART ONE
FUNDAMENTAL LAWS

TITLE I
The People's Republic of Albania

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ARTICLE 1

Albania is a People's Republic in which all powers are derived from and belong to the people.

ARTICLE 2

In the People's Republic of Albania the people rule by means of various representative organs of state, namely, the People's councils which came into existence during the struggle for national liberation against fascism and reaction and which represent the greatest victory of the large masses of the Albanian people.

These organs are freely elected by the people from the local councils to the People's Convention.

[666]

ARTICLE 3

All the representative organs of the state are elected by the citizens by free elections, and by universal, equal, direct, and secret ballot.

In all organs of the state the representatives of the people are responsible to their constituents.

The constituents have the right to recall their representatives at any time. The exercise of this right is to be regulated by a special law.

ARTICLE 4

All the organs of the state exercise their functions according to this constitution, and according to laws and regulations passed by the high organs of state.

3 [p. 2 is blank]

[Constitution]

642 All activities of the administrative organs of the state and courts must be based on law.

TITLE II

Social and Economic Measures

ARTICLE 5

471 In the People's Republic of Albania the means of production comprises all the wealth of the people owned by the state, the cooperative organizations of the people, and private individuals whether real or legal entities.

The wealth of the people includes mines and all other sub-surface resources, as well as waterways, natural wealth, forests, pasture land, airways, postal service, telegraph, telephone, radio stations, and banks.

[439] Foreign trade is under the control of the state.

ARTICLE 6

185 In order to protect the vital interests of the people and to improve the standard of living and in order to exploit all the economical forces the state undertakes to direct the economic life and development by an overall planned economy. The state, by controlling its economy and the cooperatives, exercises a general control over private economy as well.

[575] The state, in order to carry out the general economic plan, relies on the trade unions of the working men and civil servants, the cooperatives of the peasants, and other organizations of the laboring masses.

ARTICLE 7

471 The state regulates and directs by law the use of the collective wealth of the people. The collective wealth of the people is especially favored by the state.

ARTICLE 8

474 The state is especially interested in the cooperative movement of the people which it favors and assists.

ARTICLE 9

421 Private property and private initiative are guaranteed
[428] by the state. Private inheritance is guaranteed. Nobody may use private property to the detriment of the public.

9: Albania (no date) 1946 EGl Albania EGl

[Constitution]

ARTICLE 52

The constitution can be changed or amended only by the People's Convention. 642

Bills for changes or amendments in the constitutions may be proposed by the Presidium, the Government, or by two-fifths of the members of the People's Convention.

Changes or amendments to the constitution must be passed by an absolute majority of the members of the Convention.

(b) *The Presidium of the People's Convention*

ARTICLE 53 643

The People's Convention elects its own Presidium which shall consist of a president, two-vice-presidents, a secretary, and seven members.

ARTICLE 54

The Presidium of the People's Convention has the following duties:

1. It calls the People's Convention.
2. It designates the elections for the Popular Convention.
3. It makes authentic interpretations as to the constitutionality of the laws. These interpretations are then submitted to the People's Convention for approval.
4. It makes authentic interpretations of the laws and issues decrees.
5. It promulgates the laws passed by the Convention.
6. It exercises the right of pardon in accordance with the prescriptions of the law.
7. It awards decorations and honorary titles upon recommendation of the Prime Minister.
8. It ratifies international treaties, except when it considers it necessary for ratification to be made by the People's Convention.

and his assistants are appointed by the People's Convention. 693

District attorneys of the prefectures and subprefectures are appointed by the Attorney General. [646]

ARTICLE 86

All district attorneys are independent of the local governmental units and are responsible only to the Attorney General, from whom they receive orders and instructions.

ARTICLE 87

District attorneys are authorized to initiate penal actions and also to exercise the right of appeal as well as the right to intervene during a judicial or administrative trial. District attorneys can exercise the right of appeal against summary decisions of the courts and other administrative organs when such decisions are illegal. [692]

ARTICLE 88

The district attorney of the military courts of the national army of the People's Republic of Albania and other military attorneys are appointed by the Commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the Republic. [701]

TITLE V

Relation Between the Executive and Administrative Departments

ARTICLE 89

The Presidium of the People's Convention may annul or suspend decrees, instructions, and decisions of the government when they are unconstitutional and illegal. 642 ●

The government may annul or suspend decrees, ordinances, instructions and decisions of ministers when they are contrary to the laws, decrees, instructions and decisions of the government.

ARTICLE 90

The Presidium of the People's Convention and the higher people's councils may suspend any illegal or irregular act of the lower people's councils. 643 631

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

escorting him to town, guarding him during his stay there and escorting him home again. If they refused without justifiable cause to give him such service, he withdrew his support from them at least for a time.

The bajraktar[3] was also much occupied with local administration. Here he was assisted by one or more headmen, hereditary officials like himself. Independently or together, he and they checked quarrelling, judged and formulated new laws. He was admittedly their superior, and when their views diverged his prevailed. If pressure of work made him think an increase in their number desirable, he had power to make extra appointments provided only that he first submitted the names of his nominees to the Turkish government for approval. In short, he was the acknowledged head of the local administration.

As supreme administrative head the bajraktar had power to summon a general meeting for administrative as well as military purposes. If the matter at issue was important and affected the whole tribe, he sent the *kasnec* (tribal messenger) to command the presence of one man per house. If narrower issues were involved he summoned only one or more headmen and the local *gjobtarë* (fine-collectors) or other elders. Plenary meetings dealt with anti-social acts grave enough to involve the death penalty or expulsion, judged cases of sacrilege against the church, tightened up tribal discipline by enacting new or re-enacting old laws, decided whether to revolt or not against the Turkish government, and heard important messages from the government. In 1908 a plenary meeting[1] was held by each tribe to decide whether or not it should accept the Young Turk Constitution. Smaller meetings handled business where fines were sufficient punishment for transgression. Notably they regulated grazing rights, fixing the day for a general move to summer pastures, stipulating how many animals each family might feed on a common. They also regulated wood-cutting rights and controlled the supply of water for irrigation. The bajraktar[3] presided at all such meetings, took an active part in the deliberations, and signed or set his seal on any minutes that were kept. He and the elders, as being socially superior, sat apart from the commoners. In the Malësi e Madhe he sat on the ground while the tribesmen stood respectfully on their feet.

[1] See M. E. Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws and Customs of the Balkans*, p. 74.

[3] [the local military leader--Analyst]

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

In certain cases the bajraktar and the local headman could act alone. For example, in case of sacrilege against the church they had power to pronounce even a death sentence. In practice, however, they preferred to consult the tribe and the ecclesiastical authorities. After the Young Turks introduced their constitution in 1908 they tried to make everything in Albania very legal and proper. If land was bought, for example, they required a deed of conveyance where the word of witnesses had formerly sufficed. The best lawyer in the land might write out the document and great men witness it, but it had no legal validity until the bajraktar and local headmen had affixed their seals.

As a legal figure the bajraktar had special weight. If called to serve on a jury of twenty-four men, his single person was counted equal to the twelve jurors left unnamed by the elders. A peace made in his presence was particularly binding. If at all distinguished he was often called in by another tribe to settle a dispute that had baffled its own elders. In his own tribe, besides acting as judge in many ordinary cases, he was ultimate referee in all difficult cases. Boundary disputes, the most fertile source of trouble among these land-starved tribes, were often referred straight to him for settlement. Disobedience to his ruling might entail the worst penalties. Particularly in the Malësi e Madhe, he and the local headman had power to appoint elders to settle a quarrel. If these failed to do so, or were found to have based their decision on a false oath by one of the litigants, it fell to the bajraktar and the local headman to reopen the case and to pronounce a final judgement. If a headman judged a case and gave a verdict the bajraktar disliked, he could upset this verdict and substitute one of his own. But neither headman nor elders could upset his judgements; these were always final and unalterable.

All the above applies to the non-tribal areas of central Albania as much as to the northern tribes. Mus Ballgjini of Çermenikë, for instance, was almost more famous as a law-giver than as a military leader. By a seeming exception the bajraktar of the Perlat tribe of Kthellë did not judge but left such matters to the elders. The explanation of the anomaly probably lies in his notorious incompetence. It was every bajraktar's province to judge in peace as well as to lead in war.

In all areas the jurisdiction of the bajraktar was subject to certain limitations. If the commoners did not like one of his decisions,

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

[Covenant of Mat, 1942]

[61] whether they be young or old, and must not let them exist within the [65] boundaries of the district of Mat. If there are any such persons, the people of Mat, together with the local authorities, must destroy them, not only with the rifle, but also with the fist. For no one can endure a person who is a traitor and has neither character nor morals. The entire people must disown such men and attack them with all its strength until it destroys them root and branch.

[62] 12. By statutory law the Albanian and the Italian peoples are brothers with the same mother and the same father. That is to say, the two peoples have the same father who is the King Emperor and the King of both Albania and Italy. So we shall destroy anyone who insults the King by talking against him and we shall punish the fellow as specified in clause 2.

13. This Covenant which we have made at a plenary meeting of the people of Mat is to remain valid until the end of the General War, and anyone who breaks it is to be considered a traitor to his country and to the régime, that is to say, a betrayer of his fatherland and the régime.

Sgd. Beqir Sitki Hasa
Chairman of Commission
Sub-Prefect of Mat.

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
Albania EGI

and modernizing the banking system. Albania even acquired a radio station, and air travel became a reality. The King brought in foreign experts, particularly Austrians. Some of them I have known; and while they had the usual reservations about the political institutions of Albania, they respected his energy and sincerity of social purpose.

At this point Mussolini was unfortunately smitten with irrational imperialist ambition: if Hitler could have his empire of the master race, he himself was called upon to reconstruct the dominions of ancient Rome. Italian troops landed in Albania on April 7, 1939, shortly after the fall of France. They quickly overpowered the small defense army, and Zogu had to seek refuge abroad. The crown was thereupon offered to King Victor Emmanuel III, of Italy, who docilely accepted it. It is worth noting that the reception accorded the Italians was not too unfriendly, because some sections of the population expected to profit from the political change. Using Albania as an advance base, the Duce attacked Greece on October 28, 1940; but the valiant Greeks put his armies to rout and occupied nearly half of Albania. The Germans, defeating Yugoslavia, took over the rest of Albania, but confined themselves to routine control. Two resistance movements were formed, the one pro-Zogu and primarily against Italy, and the other Communist with the Germans as its principal target. The second, the National Liberation Front, was the stronger, primarily because it boldly drafted men into its partisan forces and because it maintained ruthless discipline. British commandos in the Adriatic therefore quite naturally aided it. As a result, the Front was able to assume control of the country as soon as the Germans retreated.

The provisional government formed by General Enver Hoxha, commander in chief of the National Liberation Front, was recognized by the United States, Great Britain, and Rus-

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
Albania EGI

sia in 1945. A republic was established during the following year. General Hoxha and his followers meanwhile made no secret of their devotion to the Communist cause, although their utterances took on the usual protective coloring. At a Congress in the little town of Permeti, on May 24, 1944, the Front had "guaranteed freedom of religion and of conscience, and equality of rights for all religions." Hoxha's partisans, like Tito's, were frequently seen at religious services. Albania, a turbulent and weapon-toting country addicted to blood feuds and similar practices, was one of the most tolerant of nations from the religious point of view. In 1930 nearly three-fifths of the total population of 1,003,000 were Mohammedans, while the members of the Greek Orthodox Church constituted another fifth. Catholics in union with Rome were noticeably in the minority, scarcely more than one-tenth of the professedly religious reported in the census, and were concentrated in the extreme north of the country. Their major religious, charitable, and educational institutions were in Scutari, an ancient town on a beautiful mountain-surrounded lake, afflicted with mosquitoes and malarial fever. Ancient ties with Italy, which Mussolini so wantonly divested of moral and diplomatic import, had led to the existence of a considerable number of religious of Italian origin in Albania, and also to the settlement of many Albanians in Italy. This fact would no doubt have given rise to some antipathy even under normal conditions. Yet on the whole few in Albania were apprehensive when the war ended. The age-old tradition of religious peace seemed to preclude violent change.

Albania had a rude awakening. General Hoxha was interested in nothing less than freedom of religion. Information concerning the fate of the Moslem majority is meager and difficult to come by. But laborious piecing together of news items from Albanian radio broadcasts and newspapers makes

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
Albania EG1
Baltic Countries RB1

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in the Soviet Union itself prior to the War against Hitler. They are almost wholly isolated. Information concerning the cultural life of the Albanian people is limited to what can be obtained from broadcasts over the government radio station.

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Hoxha did not join forces with Marshal Tito when that leader broke with the Kremlin, but was soon made aware that Albania was wholly isolated and that his Yugoslav neighbor gave asylum to dissidents who plotted a *coup d'état*. That such an undertaking might well meet with success seems probable. But Italy retains its interest in the strategic and economic advantages of the Albanian area, and its assent would be required; and currently, with the struggle for Trieste in the foreground, no entente is conceivable. The Russians apparently maintain a small body of troops in the vicinity of Tirana, but have in no other wise manifested great concern. Apparently they consider Hoxha a negligible problem child. It is apparent, however, that the Russian garrison makes impossible any attempt to overthrow the dictatorship from within the country.

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The fate of the three erstwhile Baltic Republics—Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia—illustrates the sad truth that in troubled and imperialistic parts of the world it does not pay to be a small nation. Each of the three had a solid folk or tribal core round which language, mores, and religious tradition had developed. For brief periods each managed to acquire a precarious independence. But they lay along the great Baltic seacoast route from Western Europe. German colonization efforts, spearheaded by the Teutonic Knights, went this way, and later came solidly entrenched land barons. There were periods of Swedish and Polish domination. Finally, as a result of the Treaty of Nystad, which in 1721 ended the Swedish

124 619 [463] elders,[4] 8 *bairaktars*,[5] and 5 retainers of a tribal prince, Jon Markajon of Mirdita (fig. 10, *a*).[1] Except for the chief elder of Karashegeç in Has, who was a baker, all of the elders, chief elders, and *bairaktars* were farmers. The baker was "mayor" of a village of bakers, outside the mountain area. All of these men were locals, born of local fathers and mothers taken from within the father's tribe. Preferences are thus shown for (a) agriculture as against handicrafts or trade, and (b) local as against outside descent.

Jon Markajon, the only tribal chief whom we met, and who entertained us very well at his capital in Orosh, would not allow us to measure him, although he summoned all of his subjects from nearby villages. The 5 retainers whom we measured in his house constituted his princely staff. Three of them were part-time farmers, and 2, full-time political employees. What their exact duties and titles were, we did not determine. 619 642 The ancient tribal government of Ghegnia, if we may judge by the example of Mirdita, the one tribe in which it survived more or less intact until 1929, consisted of a graded hierarchy with three steps—elders and their chief, *bairaktars*, and tribal prince. Attached to the prince was his staff of special messengers, chamberlains, and guards.

The tribal government was in the hands of the prince and his council, which consisted of all of the elders of the tribe, with their chief elders, and the *bairaktars*. The heads of large and powerful households, even if they held no [623] formal office, would be included. The council met in cases of murder within the tribe, of intertribal warfare, invasion, or other crises involving violence. It also met to decide on its own composition, i.e., to hear the petitions of neighboring *bairaks* to join it.

619 643 The strength of the prince as compared to that of the council depended on the former's personality. During the last 50 years, for example, Mirdita has been ruled by the following princes: Bib Doda, a great and powerful man who died about 1913; Preng Bib Doda, his son, who was killed shortly after in a blood

[4] Nine from Malsia e Madhe, 1 Has, 4 Mirdita, 4 Zadrima, 3 Mati, and 1 Dibra.

1 [see cat. 110, p. 110 - Analyst]

175 a few roads and bridges, and found time to do some anthropometry.

642 After the war Albania became a republic, with a parliament. Feudal and tribal, illiterate and immobilized by the lack of roads, the people were not prepared for self-government.

643 After a number of violent episodes Ahmed Zog, son of the *bairaktar* of Mat in the tribe of Mati, became dictator, and in 1929 proclaimed himself king. Hated by the people of Elbasan because he had jilted the daughter of Verlatsi, their most prominent citizen, he was despised by his fellow mountaineers and by the Tosks as well, most of whom saw in his rule a threat to their freedom. On the rare occasions when he dared leave his palace, he had all roofs and windows searched and guarded, and even the cypress trees searched; and then he sent a double ahead of him.

He did, however, make a number of wise moves. One was to employ Colonel Stirling, famed as a companion of Lawrence in Arabia, as his personal adviser. Another was to employ General von Mirdach of the Austrian army to set up his military machine. A third was to give the British General Percy a free

625 hand in organizing a gendarmerie. General Percy brought with him a staff of British officers, which included Colonel Martin and Major Glegg. These experienced men selected an elite group of mountaineers to police the highroads, and to report and put down trouble. For the first time in history someone was taking intelligent steps to rid the mountains of feuding.

[124] We measured 62 of these gendarmes, all local men. Twenty-one came from Luma, 17 from Mati, 10 from Puka, 6 from Malsia e Jakovës, 4 from Dibra, 3 from Dukagin, and one from Malsia e Madhe. The British officers very wisely used Ghegs in Gheg country. To have introduced outsiders would have made trouble. Many of the men were serving within their own tribes and *bairaks*; too often they were in blood elsewhere. This new occupation for mountaineers gave them a chance to see more of the world than before, for they were required to train in Tirana or Scutari. Although the gendarme system made little or no direct change in the genetics of the mountaineers, for these men marry as their fathers

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Italian shipping centers, also Foggia, reputed to be a prospective bombing base for long-range American operations against the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the eastern and central Mediterranean basin and much of North Africa, more important than ever in the latest British and American strategy, would be within bombing radius of Jugoslav and Albanian airfields. Tito's withdrawal from the Soviet camp made it necessary to rely solely on Albanian bases for carrying these plans into execution. Without Saseno and the Albanian airfields (of which there were about ten by latest report, half of them developed to the point where they could serve heavy planes), Soviet submarines would be barred from the Mediterranean and Soviet bombers would be pushed back to the Danube valley. We of course have no direct information about the extent of recent Soviet activity on Saseno. However, foreign intelligence services in contact with underground elements inside Albania believe that although newspaper stories about elaborate concrete submarine pens are exaggerated the scale of fortifications makes Saseno a formidable threat to naval movements in the Mediterranean in time of war as well as to military installations in Italy and North Africa.

With such valuable eggs in its little Albanian basket,[1] the Kremlin naturally ordered Prime Minister Hoxha to show the utmost diligence in rooting out any dangerous nationalist sentiments that might appear in the Albanian Communist Party. There had been a nationalist movement of some promise in Albania during the war, but its leaders had lost standing for various reasons—some because they collaborated with the Communists, some because they collaborated with the Nazis when the latter replaced the Italians after the Italian capitulation, some because American and British propaganda tended to favor the Albanian Communists as a way of helping the Jugoslav Partisans, especially after the Allied landing in Italy made it seem possible that Churchill might succeed in having an Allied expedition sent into the Balkans. When Hoxha set up his government in Tirana in November 1944 he maintained the appearance of collaboration with such non-Communist resistance elements as still existed and were willing to join the new "Democratic Front," the organization which now replaced the openly Communist "National Liberation Front" of the war years. But the need for concessions to patriotic

[1] [i.e. Russian political and strategic interests, see cat. 116, pp. 228-229.—Analyst]

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665 nationalist and democratic forces in the country diminished as the Communist Party tightened its hold; and following the one-ticket 642 elections of December 2, 1945, it came to an end. The monarchy was abolished in fact as well as in name, the People's Democratic Republic of Albania was proclaimed and the non-Communists who had been collaborating with Hoxha fled abroad or were shot. There followed the agrarian "reforms," the nationalization (confiscation) of such small industry as existed in the country, the elimination of independent shopkeepers and the other measures which so much pleased the Soviet commentator quoted earlier.

186 Among the strongest incentives to Albanian nationalistic feeling 648 are Albania's claim to the Kossovo area in Jugoslavia, where there is an Albanian minority, and Greece's claim to the Northern Epirus district in southern Albania, where there is a Greek minority. Propaganda in favor of one annexation and counter-propaganda against the other are the habitual stock-in-trade of Albanian patriots.

148 Italy annexed Kossovo to Albania in 1941—one of Mussolini's cheap rewards for the Nazi victory in Jugoslavia. The action strengthened the Jugoslav resistance, notably on the part of the Serb Chetniks, for the Kossovo plain holds a special place in Serb history and in the hearts of Serb patriots. In the end the district went back to Jugoslavia, after the Italians and later the Germans had been expelled. One of the returns which Hoxha had to make for Tito's material and moral support was to put an end to the former annexationist propaganda in that direction.

Developments on the other front were more favorable to Hoxha. Britain always had been a friend and protector of Greece, from imperial interest as well as Byronic sentiment, and the United States had taken over a share in that rôle under the Truman Doctrine. Hoxha could point to the fact that the two Western Powers were hostile to the Greek Communists as well as to his own Communist régime, whereas the Soviet Union was friendly to both; and on this basis he could argue that if the Greek Royal Government won it would have British and perhaps American support in claiming Northern Epirus, whereas if the Greek Communists won they would be instructed by the Soviet Government to withdraw any claim on another Communist country's territory. On balance, Communism

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[For the economic and political position of Albania under Soviet control since the death of Stalin, see 85: Zinner, Rl Soviet Union, Category 116, Pp. 157B-163B.]

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[For the complete English translation of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Albania as approved by the Constituent Assembly of 14 March 1946, see category 116, entire source.]